DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 188 808 RC 012 075

AUTHOR Nelson, Kerry D.: And Others
TITLE Utah Small Schools Improvement Project: Strengthening Rural Education Through Cooperative Action. Post Conference Report.
INSTITUTION Utah State Board of Education, Salt Lake City.
PUB DATE Aug 79
NOTE 18p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Cooperation: Ancillary School Services: Boards of Education: College School Cooperation: Community Involvement: Community Resources: Curriculum Development: *Educational Improvement: Educational Planning: Elementary Secondary Education: Inservice Teacher Education: *Objectives: Preservice Teacher Education: Rural Population: *Rural Schools: *School Administration: School Community Relationship: *Small Schools
IDENTIFIERS *Utah State Small Schools Conference

ABSTRACT

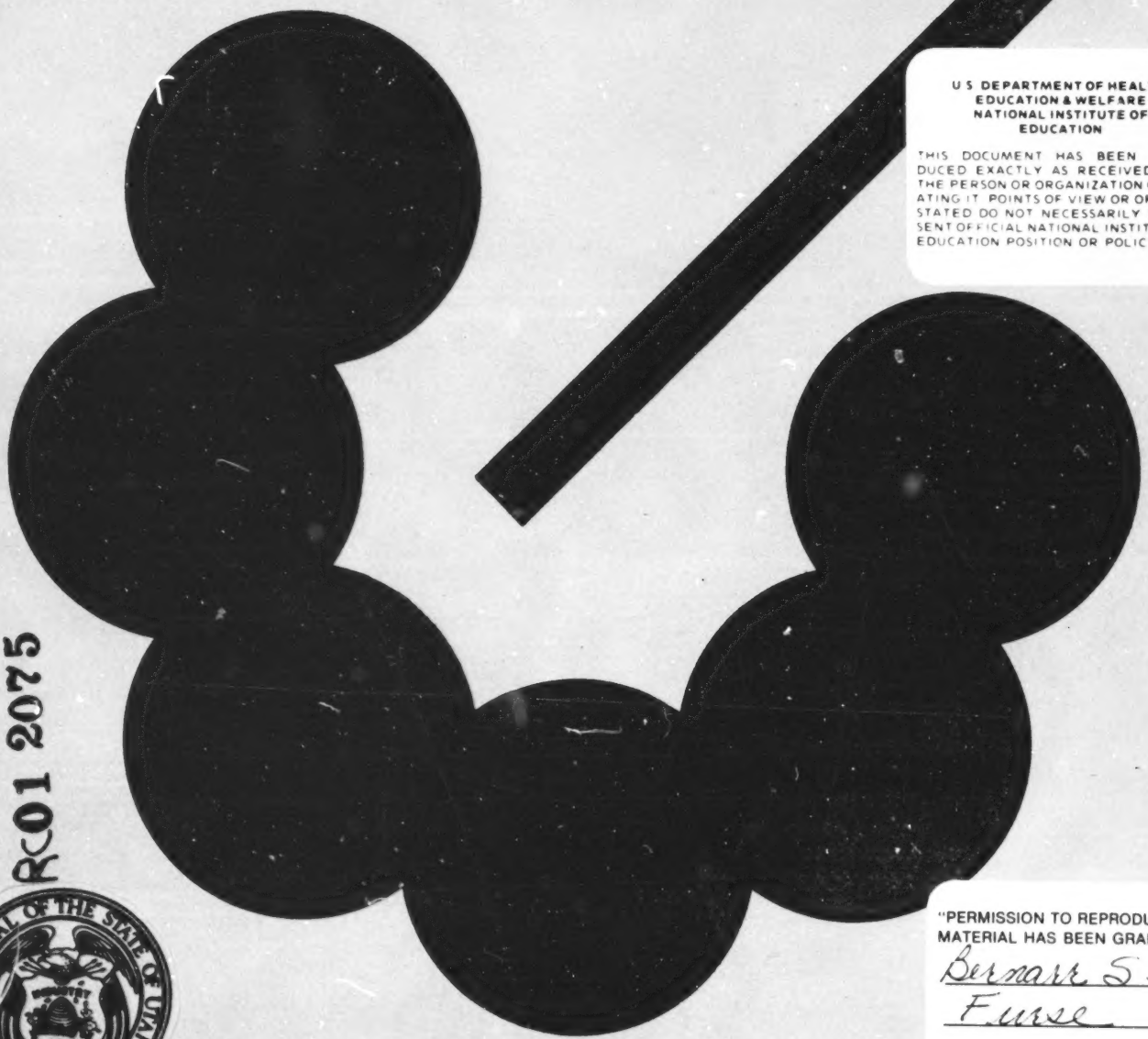
Resolutions resulting from the first statewide small school conference in Utah reflect the most pressing needs and concerns faced by Utah educators and lay citizens. They deal with small school certification, inherent strengths and weaknesses, preservice training, funding, research on innovations, and technical aid on community involvement in small schools. Four goals are detailed with several examples of the means by which each goal may be reached, including specifics on how, who and when. One goal is to provide all students with the curriculum programs, equipment, materials, and facilities necessary for the varied experiences that will enable students to enjoy an equal opportunity for a quality education. One method listed to help achieve this goal is to provide flexibility in accreditation standards for small schools (how). This goal would be met by the State Education Agency (SEA) staff (who) would conduct a review of standards with district staff and principals during the 1979-1981 year (when). The other goals propose to: maximize use of school and community resources: develop greater community involvement: and develop strong preservice and inservice education programs. Concluding the report are over 150 suggestions for and from the SEA, superintendents, citizens, parent groups, teachers, school board members, service center directors, principals, colleges, universities and vocational schools. (AN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED188808

STRENGTHENING RURAL EDUCATION THROUGH COOPERATIVE ACTION

POST CONFERENCE REPORT



U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

RC01 2075

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Bernard S. Furse
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

UTAH SMALL SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

POST CONFERENCE REPORT

OFFICE OF THE

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Walter D. Talbot
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF SPECIAL PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

Don K. Richards, Administrator

Kerry D. Nelson, Project Director
Small Schools Improvement Project

Salt Lake City, Utah

August 1979

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

AND

UTAH STATE BOARD FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

BOARD MEMBERS

Jay A. Monson, Chairman
District 4
Logan 84321

Stephen L. Garrett, Vice Chairman
District 7
Cedar City 84720

Jesse Anderson
District 4
Ogden 84401

W. Dean Belnap
District 5
Bountiful 84010

Mrs. Lila B. Bjorklund
District 1
Salt Lake City 84103

Mrs. Joan Burnside
District 2
Magna 84044

Mrs. Erma J. Christensen
District 1
Salt Lake City 84105

A. Glenn Christensen
District 2
Salt Lake City 84120

Rodney L. Dahl
District 3
Sandy 84070

Ross B. Denham
District 7
Provo 84601

Karl Shisler
District 6
Roosevelt 84066

Walter D. Talbot, Executive Officer

LaPreal W. Lublin, Secretary

UTAH SMALL SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Awareness of the unique problems in small schools began in 1976, when technical assistance teams reported that superintendents, principals, and teachers were concerned about the quality of education in small schools.

The State Education Agency did a study to verify these concerns during 1977. As a result, Kerry Nelson was given the assignment to make a proposal that would identify needs, look at possible solutions and suggest the role of the State Board of Education.

Twenty-five educators representing all areas of the state, and different concerned groups, agencies, and institutions met twice to study the problem and formulate the proposal to the State Board of Education. The proposal was approved by the Board in October, 1978.

The proposal called for an SEA staff member to serve as an advocate for small schools and the appointment of a state advisory committee. Superintendent Talbot assigned Kerry Nelson of the SEA staff as project director for small school improvement. Superintendent Talbot then appointed a 30-member state advisory committee made up of SEA staff, superintendents, regional service center directors, principals, local board members, lay citizens, university and other post-secondary institutions.

The committee met twice where SEA staff member, Joe Rickards, led the group through the involvement process for the purpose of goal development and planning next steps. SEA staff and subcommittee from the advisory committee planned a state-wide small school conference. On May 31, and June 1, 1979, approximately 200 interested people representing the same groups as the advisory committee met to:

Validate the goals of the State Small Schools Advisory Committee with lay and professional leaders in rural education from across the state.

Provide direction for the State Advisory Committee in their role as official advocates for improving small schools in the state of Utah.

Stimulate rural educators to look for new and better ways to achieve cooperative action for improving small schools.

Develop a sense of unity and cohesiveness among educators and lay citizens engaged in the movement to improve small schools in the state of Utah.

Give participants a "bank" of workable ideas to improve and strengthen education in rural Utah.

Provide input to the SEA and other state and regional institutions to improve and strengthen their efforts to develop a strong support system for small schools in the state of Utah.

Conference Resolutions

Educators and lay citizens attending the first state-wide small school conference compiled the following conference resolutions. These resolutions reflect the most pressing needs and concerns faced by small school educators and lay citizens as viewed by the conference participants. (Not listed in order of importance)

That the State Education Agency study certification requirements as they affect small schools to see if greater flexibility could be built into the present certification requirements in order to remedy some of the restrictive rules that place a particularly difficult burden on small schools.

That the State Small School Advisory Committee be responsible for identifying small school characteristics, including inherent strengths on which to capitalize and weaknesses that need to be overcome.

That teacher training institutions provide preservice training and field experiences in small schools that will better prepare teachers to live and work in small school communities.

That the state provide funds to help identify and develop model small schools and programs to give rural educators a realistic idea of programs and practices that work.

That the State Education Agency initiate a study to review small school programs and educational opportunities in general to see if the present system for funding small schools does indeed provide for equal educational opportunity.

That the State Education Agency, in cooperation with teacher training institutions and other agencies, make research on small school innovations, etc., more accessible to small schools.

That the State Education Agency provide technical assistance to small schools on the "how to's" of community involvement.

That the State Small School Advisory Committee make a concerted effort to encourage the allocation of special funding to provide exploratory occupational and vocational experiences for students in small schools in Utah.

That the State Small Schools Conference be repeated on an annual basis.

Goal #1

Make available to all students the curriculum programs, equipment, materials, and facilities necessary to provide the varied experiences that will enable students to enjoy an equal opportunity for a quality education.

Recommendations

Research and disseminate alternative methods of providing education experiences for students in small schools. Develop a "bank of ideas" for small school improvement projects that can be used by interested groups to explore ways of solving small school problems.

Identify and develop model small schools and exemplary programs that will illustrate "how to" ideas for small school improvement.

Seek support of the State Board of Education, the joint legislative committee and others to review existing research and conduct new studies to determine the status of small schools in Utah. These studies should include a comparison of the quality and quantity of educational opportunities in all areas of social and academic achievement, present small school funding, and the feasibility of equalization of capital outlay as a method of increasing resources to small isolated schools.

Develop a practical process of selection, preservice training, and continued inservice training for teachers interested in or presently teaching in small schools.

Develop more flexibility in certification requirements for teachers in small schools, which allow for broader preparation and special consideration for such areas of the curriculum as vocational education, music, art, and others.

Provide for teachers who are qualified in other curriculum areas to teach vocational subjects without loss of federal funding, even though they are not fully "certificated" in vocational subjects.

Provide flexibility in accreditation standards for small schools.

Encourage and help schools develop student advocacy program to insure that every student has an opportunity for counseling and individual education planning.

How	Who	When
Conduct a survey of existing research and ongoing practices that provide alternatives.	SEA staff, teacher training institutions, regional service center directors, SS Proj. Dir.	School year 1979-1980
a) Select three or four small schools that are interested in becoming model schools. b) Provide resources including consultant help, procuring available funding and working with teacher training institutions to increase resources.	a) SEA staff, superintendents b) SEA staff, superintendents, teacher training institutions, regional service center directors, principals, and lay citizens.	a) 1979-1980 b) 1979-1982
a) State Board representatives meet with legislative committee representatives to initiate research. b) Review existing research. c) Conduct additional research as needs are identified. d) Develop "idea bank."	a) Dr. Talbot or his designee. b) SEA staff c) SEA staff d) SEA staff, regional service center directors, teacher training institutions.	a) Summer or fall of 1979 b) 1979-1980 c) 1979-1982 d) 1979-1982
State Board of Education and teacher training institutions work together to develop teacher training programs for teachers in small schools including early identification pre and inservice.	SEA staff, universities, regional service centers.	1979-1982
State Board of Education initiate a study of certification needs of small schools. Make recommendations to appropriate individuals or groups.	SEA staff, teacher training institutions, superintendents, principals, lay citizens, board members.	1979-1980
SEA staff work with federal and other staff to determine the feasibility of this change.	SEA staff, district staff, principals, federal rep.	1979-1980
SEA staff conduct a review of standards.	SEA staff, district staff, principals.	1979-1981
SEA staff develop and disseminate instruments to determine performance of students in small schools. SEA staff will assist small schools to develop systems, procedures, and appropriate training in the area of student advocacy programs.	SEA staff, teacher training institutions, regional service center directors, superintendents, teachers, and lay citizens.	1979-1982

Goal #2

Make maximum use of school and community resources at the local, regional, and state levels to broaden the curriculum of small schools, increase educational opportunities and thereby better meet the needs of individual students in all areas of academic and social growth.

Recommendations

Increase communication and cooperative action between the SEA, LEAs, Regional Service Centers, and teacher training institutions to better meet the needs of small schools.

Have the SEA, in cooperation with the teacher training institutions, assume a stronger leadership role in making available to small school communities the latest research on small school innovations, etc.

Make available grants of money to schools and individual teachers to develop creative and innovative ideas to improve quality of education in small schools and to share these ideas with other small schools in the state.

Through a coordinated approach at the local, regional, and state levels, involving a variety of agencies and institutions, identify potential resources to assist small schools and establish systems for access and dissemination at the local level. These systems should be developed to serve the needs of teachers, administrators, and interested lay citizens.

How	Who	When
Provide leadership in developing exemplary models of cooperation and coordination between agencies and institutions in the state for the purpose of impacting small schools. Example: SEA, teacher training institutions, and regional service centers developing cooperative efforts in the area of inservice training.	SS Project Director, Advisory Committee, SEA staff, regional service center directors, teacher training institutions, lay citizens.	1979-1980
Provide leadership in developing a system to make research on small school innovations, etc., available to rural educators and lay citizens through regional service centers.	SS Project Director, Advisory Committee, regional service centers, teacher training institutions.	1979-1980
Small schools will be encouraged to apply for grant money to develop new and innovative ideas for improving small schools.	SS Project Director, Advisory Committee, superintendents, regional service centers.	1979-1980
Local administrators, teachers, and lay citizens complete a resource survey. SEA staff provide data about available resources. Regional service center directors identify regional resources.	SS Project Director, regional service center directors, superintendents, principals, teachers, lay citizens.	1979-1982

Goal #3

Develop greater community involvement and support for the purpose of bringing about a closer working relationship between the home, the school, and the community.

Recommendations

Develop alternatives and provide technical assistance to small schools in implementing systems and procedures for bringing teachers, parents, and students together to engage in individual education planning--planning that will lead to a cooperative effort between the home, the school, and the community in meeting the individual needs of students.

Develop systems and procedures that will enable small schools to make greater use of community resources to enhance curriculum and instruction.

Provide technical assistance to districts with small schools in skills, techniques, and strategies for achieving meaningful community involvement in the education decision-making process.

Establish a small schools communication network to provide for a better flow of information between small schools, communities, SEA, teacher training institutions, and regional service centers.

Develop outreach programs through the community school to strengthen parenting skills and to enable parents to play a more active role in the education of their children.

State associations such as the elementary and secondary principals association and the PTA should be encouraged to focus their attention on the needs of small schools and to find appropriate ways to address those needs.

How	Who	When
Provide information and technical assistance to small schools on developing and implementing systems for individual education planning. Provide leadership in developing a model home-school-community partnership in a minimum of one small school district.	SS Project Director, Advisory Committee, SEA staff	1979-1982
SEA will assist small schools in developing systems and procedures for utilizing community resources to enhance learning opportunities.	SS Project Director, Advisory Committee, SEA Community Education Project.	1979-1982
A minimum of three school districts with small schools will become part of the public involvement training and dissemination network presently being established by the SEA Community Education Project. Inform small schools of the materials and services available to help them in developing orderly and systematic public involvement in the education decision-making process.	SEA Community Education Project	1979-1980
Establish a State Small Schools Communication Network.	SS Project Director, Advisory Committee	1979-1981
Work with a minimum of one small school district in developing an exemplary program in this area.	SEA Community Education Project	1979-1980
Establish an ongoing communication with the state associations (UEA, PTA, administrative associations, etc.) to make them more aware of the problems of small schools and to encourage the associations to give increased attention to the needs of small schools.	SS Project Director, Advisory Committee, superintendents, principals, teachers, lay citizens, teacher training institutions.	1979

Goal #4

Develop strong preservice and inservice education programs that will produce competent teachers and administrators who can function well personally and professionally living and working in rural communities.

Recommendations

Develop and implement a process for identifying students interested in teaching in small schools.

Determine needs of potential teachers in small schools and design preservice training that deals with small school characteristics, needs, problems, and strengths.

Provide more practical and convenient inservice training based on teacher and school needs that will prepare teachers to better meet the demands of teaching in small schools.

Teacher training institutions develop capability to provide preservice and inservice training programs to local communities for the purpose of training local citizens to become teachers, aides & other positions in education (similar to BYU's teaching training on the navajo reservation).

How	Who	When
a) Look for examples of teacher training institutions that have these kinds of programs.	a) SEA staff, teacher training institutions, regional service center directors.	a) 1979-1980
b) Encourage teacher training institutions to adopt a plan of early identification of prospective small school teachers.	b) State Board of Education, SEA staff, superintendents, teacher training institutions.	b) 1979-1980
c) Work with high school counselors to identify students desiring rural teaching careers.	c) SEA staff, superintendents, principals, and counselors.	c) 1979-1982
d) Contact junior colleges to encourage early identification of students and development of suitable experiences for these students.	d) SEA staff, superintendents, regional service centers, and junior colleges.	d) 1979-1982
Encourage teacher training institutions to modify teacher training programs to better equip teachers to teach in small schools.	SEA staff, teacher training institutions, superintendents, principals, teachers.	1979-1982
a) Utilize present research to provide direction in designing inservice training for teachers in small schools.	a) SEA staff, teacher training institutions, regional service centers, superintendents.	a) 1979-1980
b) Ask teachers and administrators for suggestions for improving inservice.	b) SEA staff, superintendents, principals, teacher training institutions.	b) 1979-1980
c) Work with all teacher training institutions to improve inservice training.	c) SEA staff, universities.	c) 1979
d) Improve delivery of inservice training provided by SEA staff.	d) SEA staff, superintendents, principals, and teachers.	d) 1979-1980
Cooperate with teacher training institutions to develop methods of expanding present inservice to include recommended services.	SEA staff, teacher training institutions, superintendents, regional service centers, and lay citizens.	1979-1982

SUGGESTIONS, FEELINGS, AND PERCEPTIONS

A major aspect of the recent State Small Schools Conference was planned activities to help educators and lay citizens look at small school needs and problems from many different viewpoints. The section which follows reflects the suggestions, feelings, and perceptions of the various groups attending the conference.

State Education Agency

Select more adaptable materials.
Continue advocacy program and build to it so that competitive projects have equal opportunity.
Plan inservice on a regional basis as opposed to traveling to Salt Lake City.
Help set up parent advisory councils.
Inservice training guides and technical assistance.
Study incentive pay for remote schools.
Flexibility in teacher-pupil ratio.
Present workable ideas and programs.
Reduce curriculum pressures.
List resources available--inservice in the schools with lay people invited.
Invite patrons to workshops.
Compensate teachers for extra training.
With input from teachers, create a directory of available teacher help and special programs going on throughout the state.
Demonstrate as well as suggest new teaching ideas.
Tell the story of needs and successes of small schools.
Active voice in state organization.
Develop more flexibility in state certification and training requirements for small schools.
Need to improve quality of pre and inservice teacher training.
State should provide basic research.

Superintendents

Interact with other superintendents on a personal level.
Present options for improvement already existing (state, regional, local).
Define a "model rural school."
Make teachers aware of workshops and other programs.
Bring resource people in to help teachers in specific programs.
Supply funds for special programs (creative teaching grants). Stand behind teachers and establish a good rapport with the board on their behalf.
Be willing to work with principals. Collect information.
Know what is going on and know where the resources are.
Develop more information on regional centers.
More communication through media of what is going on in schools.
Parent advisory committees in all districts.

Superintendents (cont)

Develop area resource files.
Expand inservice opportunities.
Work to attract and keep good teachers.
Conduct community resource and needs surveys and begin to use in school.
More fully used community resources.
Workshop inservice that involves parents.
Look at Synergy; shared responsibility, reporting, planning, and evaluating.
Prioritize activities and stick with business.
Support BYU and other teacher training institutions in their effort to provide rural teachers' training programs.
Encourage appropriate inservice training.
Work toward increased capital outlay funding.
Work toward coordination among and between community and schools with efforts toward legislation.
Develop better plans to meet individual needs of students (teacher advisory programs, IEP program).
Create a more workable partnership with parents in education planning.
Support of the new appointed state specialist and his committee and through this support, create a statewide unified voice for equal opportunities.
Edit a district newsletter as well as the schools newsletters to promote a better communication system between schools/home/community.
Establish priorities and strengths of each individual school and emphasize those areas.

Citizens

Be less apathetic.
Be less critical.
Give greater support.
Attend school board meetings.
Be open and communicate in a positive way with teachers and administrators.
Develop parent advisory councils (meet monthly).

PTA and Other Parent Organizations

Concentrate efforts toward:

Public relations.
Parent involvement.
Public awareness.
Incentives for young people to choose careers in teaching.
More input in professional organizations.

Teachers

Become more involved in the community.
Gain a background and understanding of local history, feelings, etc.
Provide programs for community involvement and entertainment.
Be willing to accept volunteers.
Set a good example.
Have the student council meet with the faculty in making decisions.

Teachers (cont)

Create a means of sharing successful ideas and programs with other teachers: (a) directory, (b) idea bank.
Include the media in establishing good public relations.
Make parents and lay people aware of things going on and student accomplishments.
Build teacher morale by doing fun things together.
Establish a good relationship with your administrators.
Attend workshops and inservice training to improve your teaching.
Become aware of community and other resources and use them.
Understand principals' role.

School Board Members

Have meetings at a time teachers could attend.
Visit schools.
Substitute at least two days a year.
Training and inservice for board members.
Have inservice opportunities.
Communicate with district.
Invite to programs.

Service Center Directors

Put together a regional talent bank of people in the area who could help in the schools and make it available to superintendents, teachers, and administrators.
Provide parenting class, leadership training for student body officers, and inservice (Joe Rickards), for our advisory council.
Improve services (a) materials ordered but not delivered, (b) films put in wrong cans.
Offer other services besides those connected with media.
Up-date films, materials, and other services.
Seek funding to help replace old films and duplicate those frequently used.
Make teachers aware of services and resources.
Develop resource directories.
Conduct parenting clinics.
Help with reading programs.
More communication with school personnel and school patrons on which is available through center.

Principals

Get more involved with community services.
Identify small school needs.
Work on how to get influential people to champion our cause.
More demanding of superintendent's and board members' time.
More involvement with other principals.
Use community resources.
Improve public relations.
Go to board meetings with positive attitudes.

Principals (cont)

Utilize parent advisory committee.
Be more open with information.
Overcome the idea that small school principals are not as good as large schools. Correct perception.
Get involved with secondary principals association.
Need to have opportunities to get together.
Need to have inservice opportunities.
Cooperative action at the local level.
Work on weaknesses in curriculum.
Cooperative action at state level. Use guidelines and specialist more.

University, College, and Vocational Schools

Help identify needs of the small schools.
Form a partnership arrangement between colleges and school districts.
The notion that teaching requires competency in subject matter needs review.
The notion that a teacher competent in subject matter is essential to teaching should be studied.
Rural education needs to be reconceptualized (structure, curriculum, staffing, mthods, etc.).
Universities and colleges and the SEA might form a partnership.
Emphasize public involvement.
Prepare teachers for rural schools with special training.
Make inservice available at district level.
Provide encouragement to work in rural area (for new teachers).
Teaching and preparing potential teachers to accept the rural community.
Offer special small school training.
Take a hard look at composite majors.
Re-establish rural teaching education program.
Continue to offer and promote inservice classes, distributive education, etc.
Offer classes to high school juniors and seniors for college credit.
Work toward program offerings in rural school training for prospective teachers.
Encourage composite majors and minors for prospective teachers.
On-site inservice.
Train people to teach and live in rural environments.
Inservice upgraded classroom.
Serve people where they are.
Train teachers where they will work.
Local people can supervise.